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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, March 27, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Steak Dinner for Sunday." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Leaflet available: "Cooking Beef According to the Cut."

Cousin Seth Warren is coming to dinner on Sunday and that's why we're having a steak dinner.

If you can't imagine for yourself a tip-top steak, have a look at your beef leaflet just to revive your memory. There, first thing on page three, is a picture of the way I hope that steak is going to look when it appears on our table on Sunday. Right under the illustration are the directions for broiling. A steak -- and we suggest having one from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches thick -- may be broiled by direct heat or may be pan-broiled in a skillet. That's a comfort for those housewives whose apartment stoves are not equipped with a broiler.

No, I can't give you all those directions in the leaflet. It will be much better if you ponder them carefully by yourself. If you haven't sent for a beef leaflet yet, or if you've mislaid yours, do send us a postcard for one right now. (Ask for the leaflet "Cooking Beef According To The Cut") And in the meantime borrow the leaflet from your neighbor next door. I know she'll have one on hand, if she's anything like my next-door neighbor.

But here I am running on and on when I meant to be brief, direct and to the point about giving you the menu today.

Now, one, two, three, altogether -- with pencils ready, here's the menu:

Broiled Steak; Scalloped Potatoes; French Fried Onions. Honestly and truly, Hermione, I certainly did say French Fried Onions just then and it wasn't a slip of the tongue either. You've never heard of them? Well, so much the better. You and Cousin Seth are both in for a treat on Sunday. French fried onions -- yes, made like French fried potatoes. Yes, fried in deep fat. And wonderful with steak. Now where was I on that menu? After the onions, Hot

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Biscuits; then, Spring Salad; and, for dessert the Menu Specialist suggests, Chocolate Ice Box Cake. That's so fortunate for Cousin Seth always was enthusiastic about chocolate. He couldn't ever get enough when he was a boy.

That reminds me of a story. I'll just have to stop and tell you a story about Cousin Seth and chocolate -- a true story that happened long ago when we were children together. One day on the way home from school Cousin Seth saw a great big chocolate bar in the drug store window. It must have been a foot long. He went in and asked the druggist the price of that chocolate bar, but he was told it was an advertisement and not for sale. That discouraged him a little but he continued to drop by to have a longing look at it every morning and night for several days. Finally, he took all his savings, which amounted to nearly two dollars, and persuaded the druggist to sell him that huge piece of chocolate. He told all of us children that for once he was going to have enough chocolate.

The next day was Saturday. Early in the morning Seth set off across the fields by himself carrying that precious chocolate bar. It was a hot summer day and evidently, he felt like going swimming. So he laid the chocolate on a rock high above the swimming hole. After a few hours in and out of that cool water and basking in the sunshine between times, Seth had worked up a real appetite so he went up on the rock to enjoy a feast of chocolate to his heart's content. He opened the paper wrapper at one end. Out ran the chocolate in a stream.

"All melted and just like dark brown soup," he told us bitterly afterward. "All I could do was to lie down and lick a little of it up, just like a puppy dog."

It doesn't seem any time at all since that happened. Yet here it has been almost fifteen years since I saw Seth. He'll probably have gray hair by this time and maybe he'll have become dignified and pompous, as successful men often do. But I'm sure he'll still like chocolate. And I'm sure he'll enjoy the chocolate ice-box cake we're going to have.

I'd like to get back to those crisp, brown, delicious French fried onions now. If you're ready I'll give you the recipe. These onions can be fried several days ahead of time because they keep well -- just as potato chips do. Reheat them in the oven just before serving. The ingredients number six:

6 or 8 medium-sized onions
1 cup flour
1 cup milk

1 egg
1/4 teaspoon salt, and
Cooking fat.

I'll repeat that list: (REPEAT)

Skin the onions, slice them very thin, and separate them into rings. Dip the rings into a batter made from the flour, milk, egg, and salt. Then drain well. Have ready a kettle of fat hot enough to brown a small piece of bread in 60

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seconds. Put the onions in a wire basket, lower them into the hot fat and fry until they are golden brown. Remove them, drain on absorbent paper, and sprinkle with salt. Keep them piping hot until served.

Spring salad may be made of a combination of several crisp, colorful vegetables with a special dash of flavor to remind you of lively green growing things. Crisp, cool, refreshing and vivid in color and flavor. That's my idea of a spring salad. Sliced red tomatoes, and rings of green pepper served on crisp green lettuce with two green onions at the side of the plate is one good combination. Or you can use rings of white sweet onions. French dressing with it, of course. Another spring salad is sliced cucumbers and radishes served with sprigs of watercress or parsley on lettuce. The special peppery taste of watercress is just the thing for a spring salad.

The chocolate ice-box cake is on page 55 of your radio recipe book.

There is still time for answers to a question or two.

Several letters this week asking about meringue on lemon, chocolate or cream pies. I wonder why so many listeners are concentrating on pies this week.

"What causes my lemon pie to have a watery layer between the meringue and the lemon filling?" asks one writer. Another says that she has never been successful at making meringue and wonders why. Her meringue always seems to shrink and become tough.

Three factors are to be considered for successful meringue -- the temperature of the oven, the length of time of baking and the amount of sugar used in the meringue. When the meringue is made from two egg whites use 4 tablespoons of sugar. Spread the meringue over the top of the filling, to the edge of the crust and bake in a very moderate oven (325 degrees Fahrenheit) for from 15 to 20 minutes or until the meringue is a light brown. If too hot an oven is used the meringue will be brown on top but not cooked underneath. Thus a water layer may result.

Monday: "A Chinese Dinner."

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